

REMARKS

Claims 2-10, 12, 16-20, 34-48 and 50-51 are pending in the present application. By this amendment, Claims 2-4, 7-9, 12 and 16-18 are amended; and Claims 1, 13-14, and 21-32 are canceled. Applicants respectfully request consideration of the present claims in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

I. Formal Matters:

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for indicating that Claims 19-20, 34-48 and 50-51 were allowed. Applicants have amended Claims 2-4, 7-9, 12 and 16-18 to depend from allowed Claim 19. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 2-10, 12 and 16-18 are also allowable as depending directly or indirectly from an allowed base claim. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 2-10, 12, 16-20, 34-48 and 50-51 are now in condition for allowance.

II. Conclusion:

For at least the reasons given above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 2-10, 12, 16-20, 34-48 and 50-51 define patentable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of these claims.

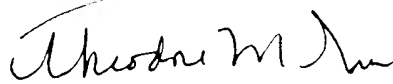
The foregoing is submitted as a full and complete Response to the Final Office Action mailed January 29, 2003, and early and favorable consideration of the claims is requested.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is necessary in order to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

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No additional fees are believed due; however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 11-0855.

Respectfully submitted,



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AMENDMENTS IN THE APPLICATION:

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.121(c), the following changes to the claims as rewritten by the foregoing amendment show all of the changes made relative to the previous versions of the claims.

In the Claims:

Please cancel Claims 1, 13-14 and 21-32 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend Claims 2-4, 7-9, 12, 16-18 as follows:

2. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 19, wherein the step of preparing the solution comprises:

providing an aqueous solution of an inorganic metal salt;
providing an organic solvent; and
mixing the inorganic metal salt solution and the organic solvent in proportions so that the desired metal salt concentration and the desired ratio of organic solvent to water are achieved.

3. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 19, further comprising the step of neutralizing the solution after the incubation.

4. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 19, further comprising the step of adding a dispersant to the solution.

7. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 19, wherein the inorganic metal salt contains a metal selected from the group consisting of aluminum, hafnium, silicon, zirconium, titanium, lanthanum, germanium, tantalum, and combinations thereof.

8. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 19, wherein the organic solvent is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, n-propanol, tert butyl alcohol, n-butanol, acetone, and glycerol.

9. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 19, wherein the concentration of inorganic metal salt ranges from about 0.005 M to about 0.5 M.

12. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 19, wherein the ratio of organic solvent to water ranges from about 1/1 to about 5/1.

16. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 19, wherein a sol is produced.

17. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 19, wherein the ratio of organic solvent to water ranges from about 1/1 to about 2/1 and a gel is produced.

18. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 19, wherein monodispersed particles are produced.